

Lord of the two wests" (376). This is but one of many *dual* references to the East and West. Although a few of these passages can be interpreted according to a flat-earth cosmology, the only consistent reading is one that recognizes that the sun sets on one part of the globe even as it is rising on another part. "[T]he Sun does not have fixed points of rising so that God may swear by them; rather they vary according to the regions of the Earth" (Khu'i 64).

The lack of a single creation story in Islam means that the gap between religious myth and scientific discovery is considerably less than it is for fundamentalist Jews and Christians. In a sense, the various references to creation in the Koran serve as a gloss on the familiar narrative in Genesis. Because this gloss is not simply an interpretation of scripture but a sacred text in its own right, it can unite the truths of faith and inquiry without seeming to favor either realm over the other.

Works Cited

- Khu'i, Al-Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Musawi. *The Prolegomena to the Qur'an*. Trans. Abdulaziz A. Sachedina. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
The Koran. Trans. N. J. Dawood. New York: Penguin, 1969.

From The Koran

God has sovereignty over the heavens and the earth. God has power over all things.

3:192

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for men of sense; those that remember God when standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying: "Lord, You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of the Fire. Lord, those whom You will cast into the Fire You will put to eternal shame: none will help the evil-doers. Lord, we have heard someone calling to the true faith, saying: 'Believe in your Lord,' and we believed. Lord, forgive us our sins and remove from us our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous. Lord, grant us what You promised through Your apostles, and do not hold us up to shame on the Day of Resurrection. You will never break Your promise."

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We have given you power in the land and provided you with a livelihood: yet you are seldom thankful.

7:11 We created you and gave you form. Then We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam." They all prostrated themselves except Satan, who refused to prostrate himself.

"Why did you not prostrate yourself when I commanded you?" He asked.

"I am nobler than he," he replied. "You created me of fire, but You created him of clay."

He said: "Off with you hence! This is no place for your contemptuous pride. Away with you! Henceforth you shall be humble."

He replied: "Reprieve me till the Day of Resurrection."

"You are reprieved," said He.

7:17 "Because You have led me into sin," he declared, "I will waylay Your servants as they walk on Your straight path, and spring upon them from the front and from the rear, from their right and from their left. Then You will find the greater part of them ungrateful."

7:18 "Begone!" He said. "A despicable outcast you shall henceforth be. As for those that follow you, I shall fill Hell with you all."

To Adam He said: "Dwell with your wife in Paradise, and eat of any fruit you please; but never approach this tree or you shall both become transgressors."

But Satan tempted them, so that he might reveal to them their nakedness, which they had never seen before. He said: "Your Lord has forbidden you to approach this tree only to prevent you from becoming angels or immortals." Then he swore to them that he would give them friendly counsel.

Thus did he cunningly seduce them. And when they had eaten of the tree, their shame became visible to them, and they both covered themselves with the leaves of the garden.

Their Lord called out to them, saying: "Did I not forbid you to approach that tree, and did I not warn you that Satan was your inveterate foe?"

They replied: "Lord, we have wronged our souls. Pardon us and have mercy on us, or we shall surely be among the lost."

7:24 He said: "Go hence, and may your descendants be enemies to each other. The earth will for a while provide your dwelling and your comforts. There you shall live and there you shall die, and thence you shall be raised to life."

It was God who raised the heavens without visible pillars. He then ascended His throne and forced the sun and the moon into His service, each pursuing an appointed course. He ordains all things. He makes plain His revelations so that you may firmly believe in meeting your Lord.

It was He who spread out the earth and placed upon it mountains and rivers. He gave all plants their male and female parts and drew the veil of night over the day. Surely in these there are signs for thinking men.

And in the land there are adjoining plots: vineyards and cornfields and groves of palm, the single and the clustered. Their fruits are nourished by the same water: yet We make the taste of some more favoured than the taste of others. Surely in this there are signs for men of understanding.

If anything could make you marvel, then you should surely marvel at those who say: "When we are dust, shall we be raised to life again?" 13:5

Such are those who deny their Lord. Their necks shall be bound with chains. They are the heirs of the Fire, and shall abide therein for ever.

.....

We have spread out the earth and set upon it immovable mountains. We have planted it with every seasonable fruit, providing sustenance for yourselves and for those whom you do not provide for. We hold the store of every blessing and send it down in appropriate measure. We let loose the fertilizing winds and bring down water from the sky for you to drink; its stores are beyond your reach. 15:19

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He created the heavens and the earth to manifest the Truth. Exalted be He above their idols!

He created man from a little germ: yet is he openly contentious.

He created the beasts which give you warmth and food and other benefits. How pleasant they look when you bring them home and when you lead them out to pasture!

They carry your burdens to far-off lands, which you could not otherwise reach except with painful toil. Compassionate is your Lord, and merciful.

He has given you horses, mules, and donkeys, which you may ride or put on show; and He has created other things beyond your knowledge. 16:8

God alone points to the right path. Some turn aside but, had He pleased, He would have given you guidance all. 16:9

It is He who sends down water from the sky, which provides you with your drink and brings forth the pasturage on which your cattle feed. And with it He brings up corn and olives, dates and grapes and fruits of every kind. Surely in this there is a sign for thinking men.

He has forced the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, into your service: the stars also serve you by His leave. Surely in this there are signs for men of understanding.

On the earth He has fashioned for you objects of various hues: surely in this there is a sign for prudent men.

It is He who has subjected to you the ocean, so that you may eat of its fresh fish and bring up from its depths ornaments with which to adorn your persons. Behold the ships ploughing their course through its waters. All this He has created, that you may seek His bounty and render thanks to Him.

16:16 He set firm mountains upon the earth lest it should move away with you; and rivers, roads, and landmarks, so that you may be rightly guided. By the stars, too, are men directed.

Is He, then, who has created, like him who cannot create? Will you not take heed?

If you reckoned up God's blessings you could not count them. God is forgiving and merciful.

God has knowledge of what you hide and what you reveal. The false gods which infidels invoke create nothing: they are themselves created. They are dead, not living; nor do they know when they will be raised to life.

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Are the disbelievers unaware that the heavens and the earth were but one solid mass which We tore asunder, and that We made every living thing of water? Will they not have faith?

We set firm mountains upon the earth lest it should move away with them, and hewed out highways in the rock so that they might be rightly guided.

We spread the heaven like a canopy and provided it with strong support: yet of its signs they are heedless.

It was He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: each moves swiftly in an orbit of its own.

Thinking and Relating Critically

1. References to creation are scattered throughout the Koran. Using those excerpted here, discuss the parallels you see between the story they tell of the